

Remnant Life Church
January 26, 2025
The Obedience of Joshua
Joshua 6:1-17

Joshua

- An important figure in the OT and the history of the Hebrew people
- Jesus' name is a derivative of the name Joshua
- Joshua is called a type or forerunner of Jesus by how he lived and served God (As was Moses, Joseph, David, Solomon and others)
- He was also involved in one of the most familiar stories in all the OT
 - It involved the final major campaign of the army before they reached the promised land
 - But it was nothing like they thought and it required Joshua to not only obey God, but exercise a tremendous amount of faith in the process

Read – Joshua 6:1-17

Background

- Israel has come to the end of their time of wandering in the desert
- Only one major obstacle remains before they begin the campaign to occupy the promised land
 - All of the men of military age who had come out of Egypt are dead as punishment for their disbelief (**Num 13**)
 - Which means this new generation had never witnessed or experienced the power of God
 - They had only heard stories but never seen them for themselves
- As a result of this, the Israelites had become a shell of their former selves
 - Even the manna they received each morning and evening had, in all likelihood become commonplace to them because they had never been without it
 - The danger of the routine and common

But a couple of very important events had to take place first leading up to the encounter at Jericho

1. The first is found in **Joshua 3** – the crossing of the Jordan River on dry ground
 - This was the first recorded demonstration of God's power and might since they started their 40 years of wandering in the desert (**Ex 32**)
 - But this demonstration was very different from the last time they saw His power at the golden calf
 - He wanted them to know that, in spite of their past disobedience, He would make a way for them through any obstacle
 - And He wanted them to understand that nothing in the natural was too great for His power
 - In part because they would need this exact type of faith again very soon
 - And not only was God preparing His people for what was about to happen

- He was preparing the enemies of the people as well
 - The kings of all the nations were getting ready to come against the Israelites and were hearing the stories of God's power
 - What impact did this have?
 - We read that *their hearts melted* (Josh 5:1)
 - This was also true when the 2 spies sent by Joshua went into Jericho and were hidden by Rahab
 - She said to them, *I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in the country are melting in fear because of you.* (Josh 2:9)
 - You may not be aware of it, but God is always preparing the way for His will to be accomplished in your life
 - But only if you have surrendered yourself to Him
 - More on that in a few minutes

- 2. The second thing that needed to happen was the renewing of the Abrahamic covenant between God and His people
 - In Joshua 5 we read that all of the men born outside of Egypt had to be circumcised
 - This was the outward, physical sign of a people who belonged to God (Gen 17)
 - Unless they were willing to identify themselves as the people of God they would have been unable to go further in His blessing (Gen 17:14)

 - All of the things of the past associated with Egypt needed to end
 - God had taken the people out of Egypt
 - But it was their willingness to embrace the covenant again and make that commitment that meant Egypt could be fully taken out of them and their hearts
 - In addition, the final element of their desert wanderings was also about to end
 - We read in Josh 5:10-12 that they celebrated Passover; they ate the food of the land and the very next day, the manna stopped
 - Why? Because God was ready to take them to a new place, meaning they could not turn back
 - Moving forward in the things of God means you must always leave the old behind

- What was it about Jericho that made it such an important victory for the Israelites?
 - It was one of if not the oldest cities in existence
 - Heavily fortified with walls that were wide enough for a chariot to ride along
 - And up until that time, it had never been conquered because it was impossible to breach the walls
 - 30-35 ft. high built on a tell or crest
 - This city was a representation and the very symbol of the strength of the Canaanite people and their gods
 - These were the same people and the same city that the spies had seen 40 years earlier when they came back to Moses afraid
 - Who was one of only two of the 12 who said let's go take it?

- Joshua – who was now leading the people
 - Everything that God does is with purpose to accomplish His will
 - Joshua’s obedience
 - (5:13) Joshua is scouting out the city
 - He is preparing to do what he had always done and done very well
 - He was a soldier and a man who understood battle tactics and strategy
 - But before things get started, he has an unusual encounter
 - The Commander of the Army of God appears to Him (5:13-15)
 - Upon first reading you would assume that was the archangel Michael but I don’t believe it was – it was Jesus
 - Why do I say that?
 - First, because we read that Joshua fell down on his face in reverence
 - That word “reverence” in the original language is *shaw-HAWCH*
 - It means to worship
 - An angel would never accept worship from Joshua
 - We read in **Rev 22:8-9** that when John encountered an angel while on the island of Patmos, he did the same thing Joshua did, and the angel rebuked him and told him to get up because he was a servant of God just like John
 - Second, Joshua was told to take off his sandals
 - The only other time someone was told to take off their shoes that person was in the direct presence of God
 - That was Moses at the burning bush (**Gen 3:5**)
 - This man with the sword drawn was Jesus, the Son of God, and Joshua recognized that when he said, *What message does the Lord have for his servant?* (5:14)
- The message the Lord had were the battle plans Joshua was to follow (6:2-5)
 - Notice that these instructions from God went against every natural instinct, experience and ability Joshua had
 - I can only imagine what was going through his mind as he was hearing this.
 - After all, the capture of Jericho was central to Joshua’s entire military strategy for entering the land of Canaan
 - And it was absolutely necessary
 - The defeat of the city was going to clearly show the world the superior power of God over the Canaanite gods and remove their greatest physical obstacle to getting the people into Canaan
 - But this was not like any other engagement they had ever experienced
 - And it would not only require Joshua’s obedience but the people’s as well
 - I have to think that more than one of Joshua’s lieutenants responded with, “Wait...He wants us to do what?”
- First, they were not going to charge in with their swords brandished to fight in the traditional way

- They were going to take a walk around the city
- But it would get worse
- They were told they had to march in silence (6:10)
 - So not only do we not get to yell our war cry but we can't even talk to each other?
 - Exactly – did you know that your words are of very little value when compared to the words of God
 - How often have your words gotten you into trouble?
 - This was a part of satan's first challenge and temptation in the garden – “Did God really say...?”
 - Not only do our words often get us into trouble but they often prevent us from hearing what God wants to say to us
 - You cannot hear what someone else is saying if you are talking
 - Sports talk shows when they are all talking at the same time
- To defeat the undefeatable city of Jericho would require the obedience of all the people from the top down and from the beginning to the end (7:1)
 - What happened when they did not obey God?
 - We read in **Joshua 7** that a man by the name of Achan disobeyed God, and it cost 36 men their lives

Three things were required of Joshua as he prepared to go into that battle, and they are still required of us today

1. **Faith** – to believe God
 - a. Even when the things going on around you do not make sense
 - b. Even when you are facing an obstacle that seems overwhelming
 - c. Faith is what transcends your own thinking, abilities, and understanding and bring them into alignment with the will of God
 2. **Obedience** – even in the face of a natural impossibility
 - a. Not only the impregnable walls of Jericho
 - b. But the crossing of the river in chapter 3
 - i. The waters were at flood stage
 - ii. The waters did not part of even slow down until the priests walked in
 3. **Surrender**
 - a. The third one was then and remains today the most difficult
 - b. It required that Joshua give up what he knew best
 - c. It required him putting aside what had always worked for him
 - d. God's instructions were brand new and it was nothing like what they had done in the past
- Until it was over, I would think Joshua was fighting doubt the entire time
 - Obviously not to the point that he did not obey or lost His faith in God
 - Struggling with a particular time in your life is not a lack of faith
 - It is what you do during that struggle that demonstrates whether you believe in the power of God in your life or not
 - Jesus had to comfort His disciples many times, especially toward the end of His ministry

- Even the very last time they were together in the Upper Room
- Listen to what He told them and know that these same words are for you and me today

John 14: 1- 6 - *Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

In the midst of the battles, it takes faith and obedience to do what God is telling you to do

But what did Joshua come to understand when it was all over?

- The same thing we should also understand
 - God's ways are greater than our ways.
 - His will is going to be accomplished.
 - And He wants to utilize you and the gifts He has given you to play a part in the victory.
- Have faith
- Walk in obedience
- Surrender your life fully to Him

That is how the walls of those fortified cities in your life will come crashing down once and for all.